



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 10

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OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

DEC 03 2012

The Honorable Doc Hastings
Member of Congress
4th District, Washington
402 East Yakima Avenue, Suite 760
Yakima, Washington 98901

Dear Congressman Hastings:

Thank you for your letter dated November 14, 2012, to Administrator Lisa Jackson of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, requesting an extension of the deadline for public comment for the EPA study entitled "Relation Between Nitrate in Water Wells and Potential Sources in the Lower Yakima Valley, Washington." The Administrator has asked that I respond on her behalf.

The report you reference was released on September 27, 2012, and the EPA accepted public input until November 30, 2012. The EPA believes that 60 days has provided sufficient opportunity for public review and input. We have received input on the report from many citizens and stakeholders, including the dairy industry and local agencies. The lower Yakima Valley effort is an ongoing process in which participation by a wide range of stakeholders is a welcome and critical part of this continued information exchange and solution-focused dialogue. After the public input period has ended, the EPA will continue to consider additional input provided by the public on the report as we consider any further action. For these reasons, I have decided not to extend the public input period.

One vehicle for continued dialogue and input is the local, state and federal stakeholder participation in a local Groundwater Management Area (GWMA). The primary goal of the GWMA is to produce a comprehensive plan to reduce nitrate concentrations in the drinking water below drinking water standards. However, while it is not the exclusive venue for interaction on groundwater and drinking water quality, the GWMA represents a key mechanism for making progress.

Thank you for your interest in the lower Yakima Valley nitrate problem. We look forward to continued robust and constructive engagement with interested parties as we forge effective solutions, for both the short and long term. We will provide you with regular updates on our progress in this regard. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (206) 553-1234.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis J. McLerran".

Dennis J. McLerran
Regional Administrator